

A RING OF CAIRNS & THE ZIA COMPASS

A Public Art Work Proposal for Fort Marcy
and Magers Field Park in Santa Fe
by Tomas Lipps

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(A Circular Seating Wall)

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This event will take place during INTERNATIONAL STONEWORK SYMPOSIUM 2020, the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Stone Foundation in Santa Fe in 2000.

It will be a performance of Stone/Work/Art by a select international troupe of highly skilled stoneworkers. Sixteen or so tons of stone will be articulated in the process of creating two high-quality stone assemblages—one temporary and one permanent—in a single day.

• RING OF CAIRNS

In Magers Field a wide circle, 40 feet in diameter—with a mature sycamore tree at its center—will be scribed on the earth and twelve equidistant points marked along its perimeter.

Approximately 1.5 tons of assorted types, sizes and colors of stone will be placed near each point.

On October 24, 2020 at 10:00 AM in the morning, 12 pairs of professional artisans—24 skilled mason/wallers from around the US, Canada, Ireland and the UK—will use these stones to build a tall (about 6 feet high) stone cairn on their designated point on the perimeter of the circle. Because they are skilled stoneworkers this will only take a couple of hours.

It will be a performance, a joyfully strenuous dance that Santa Fe townsfolk and tourists alike will be invited to witness. It will be accompanied by music made by a group of local percussionists and other musicians. Photographers and videographers will record the event.

This Ring of Cairns, each one with its own artistic character, will stand and be admired and photographed with their builders—but only for an hour or so.

• CIRCULAR SEATING WALL

At the end of this “intermission” the cairns (which cannot remain in place due to public safety concerns) will be disassembled and the stoneworkers will use the stones to artfully construct a circular dry stone wall around the tree that will be 11 feet in diameter (outside), 1.5 feet wide and about 3.5 feet tall.

At the height of 18 inches, 4 travertine stone slabs will be placed in the wall. These cantilevered slabs (oriented to the cardinal points of the compass) will project a foot and a half from the outside face of the wall providing seating for the public and structural stability to the wall—‘through stones’ in the parlance of the trade.

This, given the large number of the stoneworkers and their skills, will take only about 4-5 hours. And it will remain in place (with mortared cap stones), a permanent and pleasing amenity for the park.

The Circular Seating Wall will be brought to height and capped, excess stone removed and the site cleared the next day.

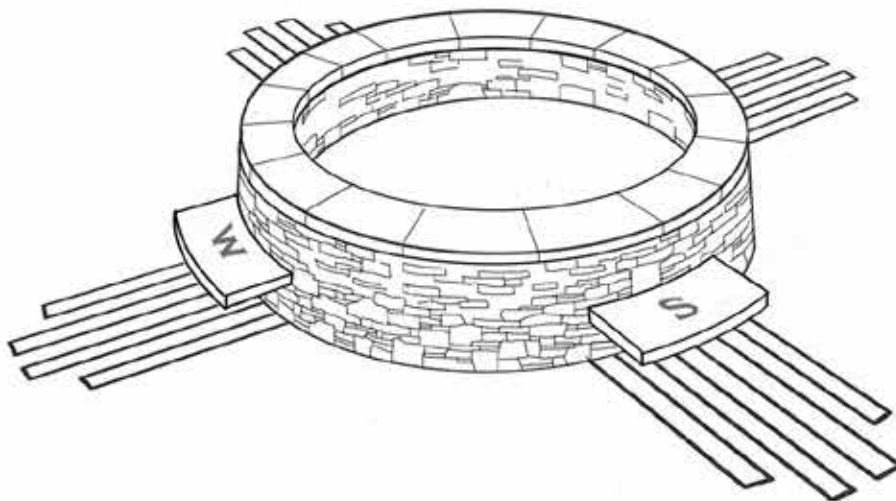
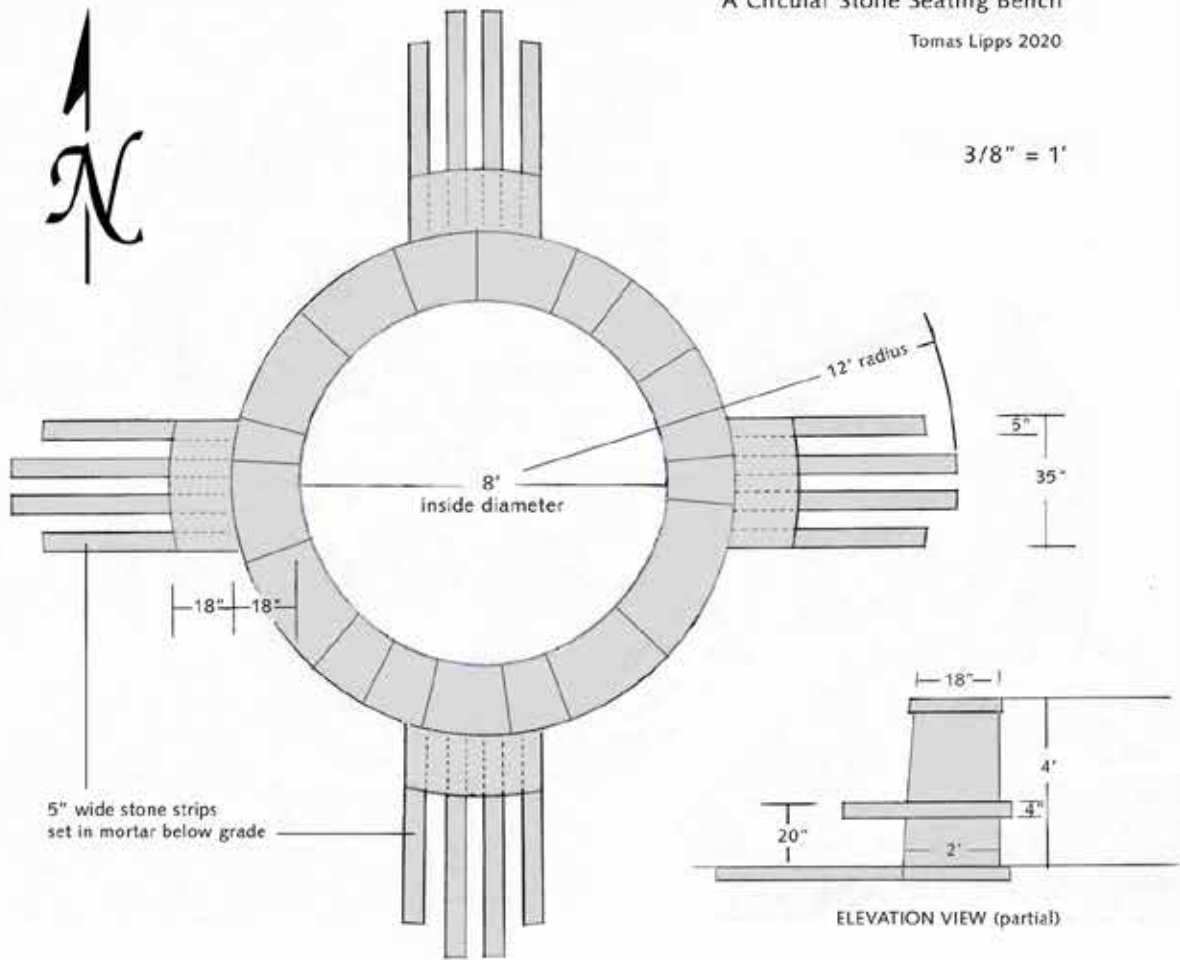
• THE ZIA COMPASS

The rays of the sun in the Zia symbol—New Mexico’s state emblem—will be represented by four sets of four parallel strips of stone, each strip five inches wide with five inches of space between the strips. These will extend outward from the circular wall beneath each cantilevered slab in the four cardinal directions—like the Zia symbol

The sixteen stone ‘rays’ will be put in place and a path made to the circular seating wall in the following weeks.

THE ZIA COMPASS
A Circular Stone Seating Bench
Tomas Lipps 2020

3/8" = 1'





The wall in the photo below is similar in scale to the wall proposed for Magers field, in particular its height. This seating wall was built by skilled dry-stone wallers from several European countries during the 2010 International Dry Stone Congress in Ambleside, County Cumbria, England—an event similar to International Stonework Symposium 2020 in Santa Fe in October of this year. The Santa Fe wall though will be somewhat dissimilar in appearance because the character of our local stone is quite different.

